

The Relationship Institute

www.therelationshipinstitute.org

After a Betrayal: Trust Building Behaviors

This is a handout we use with couples who are trying to rebuild trust after an infidelity or other losses of faith that include lying or deception. We suggest that the betrayed partner go through the list and decide which trust building behaviors s/he would like the partner to agree to practice. We recommend agreeing to these behaviors for one month and then re-evaluating which behaviors to continue add or remove.

Please note there are two sets of behaviors- low and high cost

Low-Cost Trust Building Behaviors

- Limit your overnight travel.
- Tell me when you run into your lover/drug dealer/drinking partner/gambling cronies.
- Tell me when any of these people have contacted you.
- Tell me if you're planning to contact any of these people.
- Call me during the day.
- Recognize that I am anxious and not yet trusting, and offer me reassurances.
- Tell me how you feel; share your intimate thoughts and feelings with me.
- Share your positive feelings about me.
- Share your negative feelings with me in an open, non defensive or attacking way.
- Let me know how you think and feel we're each doing getting over the hurt.
- Tell me what you need from me.
- Come home from work and have dinner with the family.
- Plan time to be alone with me.
- Spend time connecting with me and work on rebuilding our verbal, physical and sexual intimacy with words, actions and questions
- Share with me what upset you during the day.
- Listen to my positive and negative feelings, and don't try to "fix" things; listen, be curious and ask if I want suggestions or help.
- Tell me what pleased your during the day and what you're proud of.
- Focus on what I'm saying and don't be distracted when we talk.
- Tell me when you feel I've let you down.
- Work on letting your anger go and getting back on track with me.
- Show me affection outside the bedroom.
- Hold me and show understanding when I'm upset; don't give up on me.

- Stay clear about your old patterns in our relationship and stop yourself from returning to these.
- Point out to me in an open way my old patterns and when you believe I am slipping back into these.
- Learn how to comfort yourself.
- Expect me to also be able to comfort myself.
- Understand and accept that the betrayal will come up throughout our lives and know that this is normal and not done to retaliate. Help me put this incident in proportion to our lives together.
- Resist the temptation to push me to heal faster.
- Maintain a commitment to not relapsing.

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High-Cost Trust Building Behaviors

- Don't contact or associate with your lover's/drug using/drinking/gambling circle of friends or relatives.
- Quit the club or group the "old associate(s)" belongs to.
- Transfer some of your assets into my name.
- Find another job.
- Go on a romantic vacation with me.
- Pay for me to complete my college education.
- Make your cell phone, bank statements, credit card statements and email accounts available to me.
- Do not keep private accounts or secrets; share these no matter how much you are concerned about my response. Trust that I will treat you with respect.
- Give up other destructive behaviors: smoking, alcohol, drugs, and increase healthier behaviors: exercise, diet, relaxation.
- Move to another town with me.
- Provide funds for me to hire a private investigator to track you.
- Explore in therapy the genesis of your betrayal.
- Get into couples therapy with me and work to figure out exactly what the betrayal says about you, me and us.
- Answer all my questions about the betrayal in front of a therapist, so I'm more certain that you're telling the truth.
- Understand the antecedents to your betrayal and what you will do differently when any of these occur again.
- Write out a specific apology to me citing what you did, how you hurt me, what motivated you, why you are sorry and what you will do differently to avoid another betrayal.
- Create with me a ritual for us to mark the ending of our old relationship and our commitment to building a new relationship.
- Recognize on an annual basis a date for each of us to renew our commitment to our healing and creating a more resilient relationship.
- Tell me when you are tempted to relapse.
- Tell me when you are tempted to relapse even when you are on the edge of compromising your integrity and our trust.